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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Date: January 29, 2007

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ENVIRONMENTAL AFFAIRS SECRETARY BOWLES AWARDS \$200,000 IN COASTAL WETLAND RESTORATION GRANTS

BOSTON—Environmental Affairs Secretary Ian Bowles today announced the award of \$200,000 to assist communities and nonprofit organizations in their efforts to restore degraded coastal wetlands. The grants will contribute to the restoration of approximately 78 acres of wetlands in four communities, and will fund four separate regional monitoring efforts covering numerous wetland restoration sites.

“Wetlands are important for health, safety, and quality of life in the coastal communities of Massachusetts,” said Secretary Bowles. “EOEA not only works to protect and conserve these resources, but also invests substantially in efforts to restore degraded habitats back to health.”

The grants were awarded by the Office of Coastal Zone Management’s Wetlands Restoration Program, which works with a large network of partners to help bring back the lost values and services of wetlands that have been damaged by historic development. Recipients will use the grant funding to restore and monitor wetlands that protect coastal areas from flooding, improve water quality, and provide critical habitat for many species of fish and wildlife.

The grants will fund restoration and monitoring activities in the following municipalities: Barnstable, Cohasset, Nantucket, Plymouth, Salem, Saugus, Somerset, Wenham, and Yarmouth. A listing of the FY2007 Wetland Restoration Grants awards is attached.

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Wetland Restoration Grant Awards

A 25% non-state match is required for all projects

Association to Preserve Cape Cod (Barnstable): The Association to Preserve Cape Cod (APCC) will receive \$25,000 to continue their volunteer salt marsh monitoring program. Working with Americorps, SeniorCorps, local schools, and other volunteers, APCC will conduct multi-parameter monitoring at numerous WRP designated priority salt marsh restoration project sites in Yarmouth, Barnstable, Wellfleet, Brewster, Sandwich, Dennis, Orleans and Bourne. Parameters measured will include soil and water chemistry, vegetation changes, and nekton and avian use of the restoration sites.

Salem Sound Coastwatch (Salem) / Mass Audubon (Wenham): Salem Sound Coastwatch (SSCW) and The Massachusetts Audubon Society (MAS) will receive \$30,000 for coordinated monitoring efforts at four WRP priority salt marshes and three previously restored sites on the North Shore. Working in partnership with Mass Audubon, SSCW will complete data entry from past monitoring efforts, recruit and train monitoring volunteers, collect and enter new data into WRP's MarshDB, and work with WRP to report on monitoring efforts.

Town of Saugus: The Town of Saugus will receive \$30,000 designated for the restoration of the Ballard Street Salt Marsh located within the Rumney Marsh Area of Critical Environmental Concern (ACEC). The restoration project will include installation of a new culvert and self regulating tidegate designed to restore tidal flow to 22.5 acres of former and degraded salt marshes. The culvert is also designed to help control flooding in the project area. This WRP award will match significant federal funding dedicated toward the implementation of this project.

Nantucket Conservation Foundation (Nantucket): The Nantucket Conservation Foundation (NCF) will receive a \$10,000 award to conduct rigorous monitoring at the Medouie Creek Salt Marsh Restoration Project. This WRP-designated priority restoration project will restore approximately 22 acres of degraded and tidally restricted salt marsh along Medouie Creek on the north shore of Polpis Harbor on Nantucket Island. Monitoring efforts will document pre-construction marsh conditions and help partners develop appropriate restoration designs.

Cohasset Center for Student Coastal Research (Cohasset): The Cohasset Center for Student Coastal Research (CSCR) will receive \$26,720 to continue monitoring at WRP-designated priority salt marsh restoration projects, and to expand monitoring at several new sites. CSCR staff will lead, coordinate, and train high school students and other local volunteers in salt marsh vegetation, fish, avian, and water quality monitoring. Data will be collected at project sites in Cohasset, Marshfield, Hingham, Hull, and Scituate.

Town of Plymouth: The Town of Plymouth will receive \$20,000 to help restore the headwaters and wetlands along the Eel River. This project comprises seven adjacent cranberry bogs owned by the town and voluntarily taken out of agricultural production. The project goal is to restore the former bogs back to a healthy, self-sustaining aquatic system with natural river, wetland, and riparian habitats, including a historic anadromous fish run. WRP grant funds will help advance this project toward construction by supporting the preparation of engineering and design plans.

Town of Yarmouth: The Town of Yarmouth will receive \$33,050 to fund the installation of a new culvert at the Shore Road salt marsh to restore full tidal flow to a degraded 4-acre marsh. The existing, structurally-failed culvert restricts tidal flow to the marsh and also prevents the marsh from draining properly. Project partners are currently completing permitting and expect to initiate construction in spring / summer of 2007.

Town of Somerset: The Town of Somerset will receive \$25,230 toward the restoration of an 11-acre salt marsh along Labor in Vain Brook. The marsh currently suffers from restricted tidal flow and invasion of the non-native common reed. This restoration project will replace an existing undersized culvert to restore full tidal flushing to the marsh. It also incorporates flood control measures and investigation of options to treat stormwater runoff that degrades the marsh. The WRP grant funds will help partners prepare the project design plans and complete permitting for the new structures.

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